

As for everybody else, this has been an extraordinary year for us, with the COVID pandemic and the resulting restrictions impacting drastically on our work. Physical meetings have been impossible for most of the year, affecting both our own events and also a number of external ones in which we would normally have taken part. However, there is some work to report on here, either from before the lockdown or carried out in some form without physical meetings or events.

Events: Our ANC anniversary social in January did take place as usual. As we knew last year, our longstanding venue at the STUC was no longer available but we were fortunate to be offered the premises of Glasgow UNISON branch, which worked out very well. £630 was raised for NMSMF.

Our other established annual event, Nelson Mandela International Day on 18th July, fell at a time when physical events were impossible. We decided to try it online, and John Stevenson and Brian Filling created an excellent video for broadcasting online on the day. It followed something like the usual pattern, with spoken contributions from the new Glasgow Lord Provost, the South African High Commissioner and Brian Filling, and musical performances from Suzanne Bonnar and Iona Fyfe, with video clips interspersed. The Scottish Government provided funding, which covered payment to the musicians and also to the NMSMF for producing the video. Donations were generated from viewers for the Scottish Memorial.

The Scottish National Jazz Orchestra had decided quite independently to mark Mandela Day with an online performance of "A Change is Gonna Come", which we also promoted. This also included an appeal for donations for the NMSMF, reaching a new range of contacts.

Finally, we also circulated details of Kronendal Music Academy's Mandela Day programme, which included some of the young performers who came to Scotland in 2018.

Taken together, Mandela Day was probably more widely marked in Scotland this year than in most more normal years. The videos have remained available.

Stalls: Our programme of stalls selling products from community groups in Southern Africa as well as promoting both ourselves and the NMSMF has been one obvious casualty of the COVID situation. Before that arose, the 2019 Ethical Christmas Fair did happen, but in Ocean Terminal in Leith rather than a marquee in Dundee city centre as in the three previous years. The eight day stall just before Christmas was still very worthwhile, though sales were a fraction of the previous year's. Small stalls at our ANC social and a meeting at Strathclyde University both happened, but the lockdown cancelled the STUC, May Days and other events. Fair Trade on the Fringe happened in August, in the open air and with all COVID precautions, and went reasonably well in the absence of the actual Fringe and the usual crowds of tourists. We don't plan to be at the 2020 Ethical Christmas Fair. Small quantities of our Mandela-related stock have been sold on the NMSMF Ebay site.

A fairly large consignment of crafts had been received from Streetwires in autumn of 2019, so this stock has diminished rather more slowly than hoped, due to the cancellation of so many stalls. It will keep.

History: This has again been a very large element of our work, much of it in close collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Scottish Memorial Foundation. That is as expected, since NMSMF was created to take forward in a more financially efficient way charitable work for which ACTSA Scotland saw a need, so we clearly retain a strong interest in its activities while carefully recognising the legal distinction.

We have been able to provide information and material for a number of projects recording and relating the history of the campaign against apartheid, in Scotland, in Southern Africa and more widely. Our Scottish AAM archives at Glasgow Caledonian University have been physically inaccessible for the past months of lockdown, but were quite heavily used before that by researchers,

and no doubt will be again once life begins to return to normal. The long-hoped-for but not yet achieved digitisation of the archives would make them much more accessible in all circumstances and is very much being kept in mind. Material held by individuals outwith the GCU collection has been made available to researchers, as well as the recollections of long-standing activists, and material from some individuals has been signposted to relevant archives.

The schools resource pack “When Mandela Danced in the Square”, which was mentioned in last year’s report and in the preparation of which we were actively involved, was formally published by the NMSMF and the West of Scotland Development Education Centre in its refined format in print and online at the beginning of this year, just shortly before schools all had to close for the COVID lockdown. WOSDEC did a sterling job of promoting use of the material for online teaching, and training teachers in how best it could be used online and in class. Brian Filling contributed to two of the training sessions.

We have supplied information and/or materials to two separate exhibitions in Dundee about anti-apartheid history, both inevitably postponed due to the COVID closure of venues. One is organised by Matt Graham and Chris Fevre at Dundee University, and the other by Chris Law MP with Dundee Leisure and Culture. We expect to have a connection with both once public events become possible again. Chris Fevre and Matt Graham have also been interviewing Scottish AAM activists by Zoom for a separate research project, and Stewart Gillan has been doing research into aspects of anti-apartheid history. The papers of Kenneth MacKenzie, covering the early years of Edinburgh AAM and the events preceding its formation, have been found to be in Edinburgh University library.

Brian Filling has supplied information and suggested locations for a “virtual Mandela Walk” round Glasgow’s Mandela-related sites, being created by City of Glasgow College. This is expected to be completed in the next few weeks, and we would expect to help promote it as a useful resource. We have assisted also in getting historical material from some individuals to relevant archives.

Plans for our own movable exhibition on Scottish AAM history, based on the one created as an add-on to the big Mandela exhibition at the Lighthouse last year, have been very much put on hold. Some display material has been improved, and a supporter is standing by to make the portable display boards and carry-cases required, but nothing can be done presently about fixing venues and dates.

Constitution: The present meeting is the first to be held under our new constitution. Following last year’s changes our Scottish membership system was duly set up and launched for individuals, with the membership year running from July to June in line with our financial year, and we have implemented the requirement for Committee nominees to be ACTSA Scotland members. We have not yet asked any organisations to affiliate – including the one which has had a generous long-term standing order to us. The Committee decided to wait until we could consult the STUC about a supporting letter from them to trade unions before we invited organisations of any kind. We would hope to invite affiliations by early 2021, with the first affiliation fees extended to June 2022. We would therefore hope to have delegates at our next AGM.

We have affiliated to ACTSA UK as agreed and have kept up our links, though they have been affected more than we have by the lockdown since they depend on staff who were all furloughed.

We have used our Twitter and Facebook pages and our emailing list to distribute information both about our own activities and also about other Southern Africa-related events and initiatives, which we see as an essential part of our remit.

We are grateful, as always, to all who have assisted us in any way over this year, in spite of all the additional difficulties created by the extraordinary situation we have all found ourselves in.

John C. Nelson